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jan 08 / issue 2

Demo.

The Hart House Music Magazine

PLAY THIS ISSUE

MIDDAY MOSAICS. SUNDAY CONCERTS. STAGES.
JAZZ AT OSCAR'S. STUDENT COMPOSER. SAMMY'S.

POLARIS MUSIC PRIZE.
ERNESTO CERVINI.
MATT HUMPHREYS.
DOWNLOADING MUSIC.
SPICE GIRLS.
RESPECT TO PROMISCUOUS.

SPIRAL BEACH.
JENNY OWEN YOUNGS.
WES ANDERSON SOUNDTRACK.
MUSIC OF THE SPHERES.
GHOST BANDS AT SNEAKY DEE'S.

PLAY

By the Hart House Music Committee.

HART
UNIVERSIT

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letter from the editor

Dearest Readers,

New Year's Eve I found myself biting nails to help a friend narrow down the top ten albums of 2007. There are the obvious international ear-grabbers (Radiohead, Justice's surprise debut), but within minutes we found the list teeming with Canadian talent.

The first feature of this issue goes to show that even though Canadian artists may not be swimming in glitzy glamour, we stand true on artistic merit. Demo goes backstage at the 2007 Polaris Prize gala show, the award for best full-length Canadian album, regardless of genre, sales or record label. And surprise surprise, indie favorites topped the shortlist.

Speaking of indie artists, what would we do without the Internet to help us find those gems among all the self-made musicians today? What with the onset of Garageband, myspace, IMEEM, facebook and dare I mention those file-sharing applications (Kazaa, Limewire), technology and music seem to be best friends and enemies at the same time. Our Opinion writer tackles the issue of illegal downloads and the RIAA's recent head-on collision with the fine print of music theft. Afterall, maybe we are all criminals.

Don't forget to check out the Reviews Section for our writers' ratings of some local shows that rocked the tail of 2007: Indie pop-punks Spiral Beach and Jenny Owen Youngs at the Arbor room, and a lineup of Ghost Bands (they all have "ghost" in their names) to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Toronto's best corner hangout, Sneaky Dee's. Demo writers also give their take on several famous (or should I say infamous) divas abroad. The Spice Girls unfortunately gets the grill, and Britney loses R-E-S-P-E-C-T for her lyrics.

With this January issue we bring you almost double the content from our last. Most exciting of all is the introduction of our new Spotlight Section. Hear the stories of two U of T music alumns – jazz drummer, Ernesto Cervini and singer/songwriter, Matt Humphreys, on how they made it from the lecture hall to the studio.

Students, we will be turning the spotlight on you next!

It's finally 2008, and again I ask,

What are you listening to?

MACY SIU
editor-in-chief

Demo.

Music News:
On and Off Campus

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Have a comment about the issue?
Demo welcomes letters from its readers.
SEND MAIL TO:
demo.harthouse@gmail.com

Midday Mosaics:

Here for Fun

Mimi Mok

MIDDAY MOSAICS
Noon Hour Concerts:

January 23rd, 2008
Feburary 13th, 2008
March 5th, 2008
Mar 26th, 2008

12 noon-1pm
Hart House Music Room

Admission free, with complimentary post-concert reception.

Classical music might not be the most popular music amongst young people right now, but the vast repertoire now considered classical consists of a huge body of work by masters whose creations have survived changing musical tastes, a rapidly evolving world and historical upheaval to penetrate through generations of music lovers to the present.

In other words, classical music is still around today because the music withstood challenges of various music tastes, and brought joy and satisfaction to a significant many. Besides appreciating the genre, classical music is fun to play — great performers and great composers are both important to the classical medium. If one looks back on the history of Western classical music, it is not hard to find parallels of jamming sessions in your best friend's basement with beer and drums. Bach's whole family pitched in to copy scores for regular music gatherings with friends and family. Chopin and Schubert came to fame in concerts held in their friends' salons. English madrigals were popular in middle-class British families, who gathered around their pianos for some light entertainment.

"Have fun" is also the motto here at Midday Mosaics, the noon-hour concert series dedicated to people enjoying their involvement with classical music. Our concerts are a bit more formal than salon gatherings, however, the concerts are still primarily about having fun. Performers play because they like performing. Audiences attend our concerts because they find them to be a pleasant way to spend the noon-hour with friends, in the company of talented performers surrounded by the grandeur of the Hart House Music Room. This year, we are hoping to showcase more collaborative efforts alongside solo recitals. We think the joy of making music is not only in being able to produce high quality music, but to do so through close partnerships with other musicians thus making a truly rewarding experience. For example, the first concert of the season, held on Oct. 10th, consisted of two sets of musicians. Mathematics professors Catherine Sulem (violinist) and Syd Bulman-Fleming (pianist) who played Brahms' 3rd violin sonata, while soprano Hilary Knox performed art songs with pianist Mimi Mok.

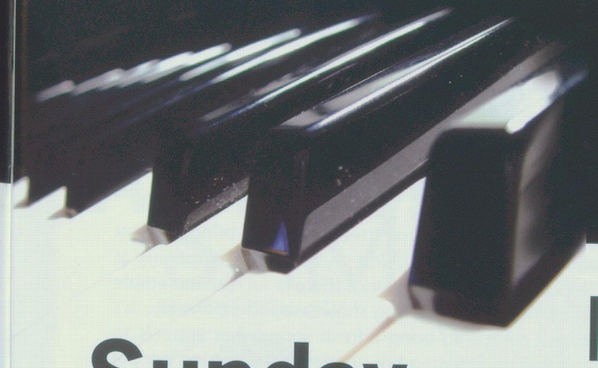
Our other goal is to welcome a wide spectrum of performers, in hopes that we provide a place for people who love music to come together and share in this joy as a community. The first two concerts this season have seen professional musicians, students, and serious amateurs sharing the same stage. Pianist Valentin Blomer, who graced our stage with an exuberant recital of Haydn, Franck, Brahms, and Mendelssohn, is a faculty member of the mathematics department. Later in the season, we are expecting more musical talents from the mathematics and physics departments.

We are looking forward to a season of variety and collaboration, but above all, quality music. We are continuing the pleasure of a specific kind of music making which boasts a long and illustrious history, and we delight in finding treasures within the huge body of repertoire simply called "classical". Come have a cup of classical music with us—maybe you will discover something new as well.

UPCOMING
Sunday Concerts

January 20th, 2008 --- Eklektica, *woodwind quartet*
February17th, 2008 --- Conrad Chow and Bo Yon, *Valentine's Day Special*
March 9th, 2008 --- Kiran Ahluwalia, *Juno Award winning world musician*

* Join the Facebook Group: "Sunday Concerts", or e-mail: tony.chiu@utoronto.ca to be put on the Sunday Concerts mailing list.



Sunday Concerts

Anthony Chiu

For many people, a classical concert is a unique experience. You arrive at the venue, dressed in something that looks somewhat nice. You glance through the programme looking for familiar names, like Beethoven or Rachmaninoff. People start clapping and you clap along, peering at the artists as they enter the stage. They take a seat. Silence. And then something magical happens; you lose yourself in the ecstasy of the music as it flows from their fingers, resonating across all time and space.

Knowing how special these concerts can be, the Sunday Concerts series is dedicated to making each concert a unique experience. Having just finished our successful 622nd concert, the Sunday Concerts is one of Canada's longest running free concert series. Each concert attests to our goal of contributing to the rich cultural landscape of Toronto through an outstanding concert experience. We have had some of the most famous musicians grace our stage, including pianists Anton Kuerti and Glenn Gould.

For this season, we have a variety of musical performances. For instance, Su Jeon, the 2007 Egré Competition Winners, was featured in November, and in December, we showcased a vocal extravaganza by the Concert Opera Group. In January, we are presnting a woodwind quartet, Eklektica. For the month of love, we have a performance of Butterfly Lover's Violin Concerto by a violin and piano duo. To end off the season, we are pleased to present you with Juno award-winning Indian musician, Kiran Ahluwalia who will be performing traditional Indian fold songs..

This year, we are working hard to recruit a younger audience base. We have introduced a broader variety to the series, one that we hope will to cater to different crowds. Also, each classical performance features one well-known piece to attract people who are not coinnosseurs of classical music. Lastly, we are stepping up our marketing outreach by using electronic forms of communication to inform students about upcoming concerts.* We hope that this will increase and diversify our Sunday Concert audience. Come and see for yourself why this series has withstood decades of change!

Stages

Brett Winestock

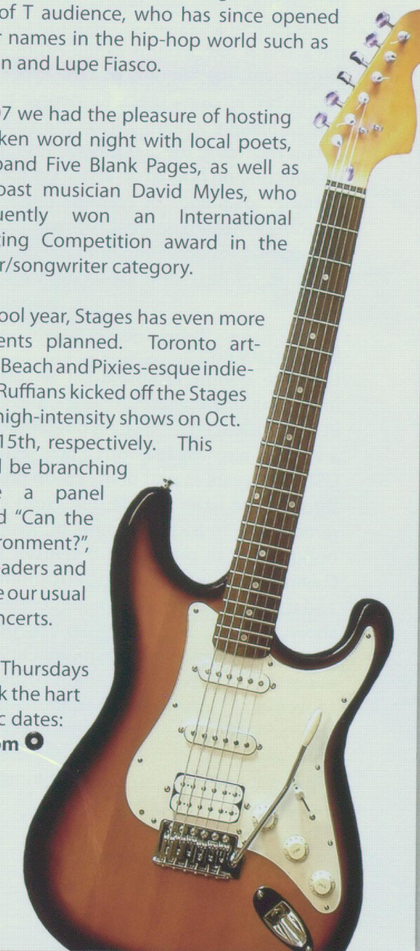
If you enjoy both live music and campus life, you've probably asked yourself at least once or twice, "What's the best way to hear live music on campus?"

Though there is no shortage of great options put on by the Hart House Music Committee, if you're looking to hear up-and-coming contemporary bands and musicians in an intimate setting before their rise to fame, then my answer to your question is to look no further than the Stages Concert Series. Last year, Stages hosted a variety of concerts showcasing rising stars in the Canadian music scene. In fall 2006, we were proud to present Dala – the power folk-pop duo of Sheila Carabine and Amanda Walther of Scarborough, who, since appearing in the Arbor Room at Hart House, have gone on to tour with Canadian alt-rock legend Matthew Good. Stages also introduced London-based MC/guitarist Shad K to a U of T audience, who has since opened for major names in the hip-hop world such as Common and Lupe Fiasco.

In 2007 we had the pleasure of hosting a spoken word night with local poets, rock band Five Blank Pages, as well as East Coast musician David Myles, who subsequently won an International Songwriting Competition award in the folk singer/songwriter category.

For this school year, Stages has even more exciting events planned. Toronto art-rockers Spiral Beach and Pixies-esque indie-rock trio Born Ruffians kicked off the Stages schedule with high-intensity shows on Oct. 18th and Nov. 15th, respectively. This term, Stages will be branching out to include a panel discussion entitled "Can the Music Save the Environment?", featuring industry leaders and performers, alongisde our usual roster of stand out concerts.

Stages events take place Thursdays at the Arbor Room. Check the hart House website for specific dates: **www.harthousemusic.com**



Jazz at Oscar's

The Passionate Process

Robyn Chan-Kent

Jazz at Oscar's is a weekly jazz series held on Fridays that transforms the Arbor Room into an intimate listening space illuminated only by candles and stage lights.

This is my 3rd year as the jazz coordinator and graphic designer with the Hart House Music Committee. Upon transferring from Jazz school in Vancouver into the Arts Management program at UofT, I became fascinated with the musical happenings at the Arbor Room and wanted to get involved. Not only was the Arbor Room a live music venue, but an open space for people to eat, socialize and study. Initially when I joined the music committee, the details regarding the jazz programming were sparse. With no structure on how to go about booking bands, handling publicity, deadlines or contract requirements, it was an opportunity to implement my own experience and build a budding musical venue from the ground up. Now, three years later, I have developed my own methodology that works.

Booking Bands:
I receive demos & emails on an on-going basis from musicians all over North America, and I am also very active in the music scene, checking out different bands 2-3 times a week. I also worked with a jazz festival in Connecticut, USA for 2 years as part of my co-op program at UofT. And through the latter I made numerous contacts with some remarkable musicians, some of which I have had the opportunity to present at the Arbor Room. With Jenny Owen Youngs, I worked with her drummer, Adam Christgau, and it was through him that we connected, and made the show possible. The November 2nd performance marked Youngs' first time performing in Canada, and made the event that much more exciting. I usually book bands four to six months in advance, prepare, negotiate, and send out contracts. Two weeks prior to the event, I design posters and send out PSA's (Public Service Announcements). While my role here is strictly a volunteer position, it takes an infinite amount of time, passion and energy to properly execute a show.

As part of the music committee, I strive to bring student awareness to the free ongoing music events happening at the Arbor Room especially since there is such an incredible roster of musicianship being showcased there weekly. It's important for me to bring a fresh sound that appeals to music lovers by crossing boundaries and exposing people to a wider spectrum of jazz. This fall, I have jazz fused with folk, acoustic, electronic, indie, hip hop, soul and many more. Don't get me wrong, I still love and bring in the traditional jazz cats, but I am continually exploring and researching new sounds. In my 3rd year now, it is finally happening – we have finally given the Arbor Room a reputation for great music. So far it has been a packed house with the Tiny Alligator Large Band, the Ian McDougall Sextet and indie pop artist, Jenny Owen Youngs and others who rounded out the first semester.

Last February marked the opening of Sammy's Student Exchange with the Salhia family, whom I began working with in early September as a member of the marketing department. The introduction of Sammy's as the new food joint at the Arbor Room has made such a dynamic difference. The opportunity to be part of that team is incredible. Not only are our goals aligned, but the Salhia family are entirely open and positive to the music being brought in. We strive to open up the doors of the Arbor Room to a music that is progressive. Working together, Sammy's and the Music Committee share the same commitment and dedication towards making the Arbor Room 'the' space for students to hear great music or just to hang.

Facebook Group: "Arbor Room Jazz"

Student Composer's Call

Maria Kaushansky

The Hart House Music Committee is currently accepting submissions for our annual Student Composer Concert from ALL UofT students, no matter their discipline. The Student Composer Concert had a great turnout in past years, and is expected to be even bigger this year! We are looking for music and any form of visual arts (painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, etc). For music, the following styles are accepted: classical, contemporary, jazz, and Latin. Don't miss this opportunity to show off your amazing talents! The deadline is Feb 1, 2008 for first submission.

Visit www.harthousemusic.com or contact harthousescc@gmail.com for more information.

All About SAMMY'S

STUDENT EXCHANGE

SABRINA TUDOR PRICE

Sammy's Student Exchange @ the ARBOR ROOM

Hours:
Full menu to 8 pm, Live Music & Late Night Menu starts at 9 pm to midnight

Join our monthly e-mail list:
office@sammysstudentexchange.com

Inspiration: "Exchange is creation."
Muriel Rukeyser, American poet and political activist

Background: The name "Sammy's Student Exchange" comes from a long history of pubs. This family chain, owned by the Salhia's, has been in the heart of Toronto for over 30 years. Not only does the name continue a string of Sammy's Exchanges known for healthy food at great value, it also emphasizes the goal of exchanging ideas with patrons. In order to create a wonderful student space for memorable events, flavourful food, and blissful music, one must open the door to allow great ideas in.

The Mission: Let's get this party started quickly!

Objectives:

✓ Attract music and art lovers young and old to help create a musical art hub on campus that will evolve through many different shapes, sizes and sounds!

✓ Be the venue where those in attendance feel they are at an exclusive show for a up-and-coming musical legend - from a warm acoustic candlelit evening to a funky band that makes you want to get up and dance!

Design plan: Candlelight setting, sleek new bar, ambient sound quality and enjoyable eats. Build an "exchange station" where students and staff can answer and exchange questions to be a part of the creative process.

Questions that need some Answers:
Does the Arbor Room need a dance floor?
What would you prefer: morning folk musician with a rice krispies breakfast or a lunch time jazz quartet?
More local beer choices,
or beer samplings from all over the world?
Spoken word, or karaoke nights? Jazz or funk?

Best part: No cover
Even Better Part: EVER!!

Wanted: Volunteer Host/Hostess.
Apply in person at Sammy's.

SSX Trivia:
Q: What does Sammy say when he eats amazing food?
A: "It's like music!"

SAMMY'S Student Exchange

Upcoming Late Night MENU, January 2008:

Tapas Fiesta Theme:
- authentic hummus & pita
- magnifico Mexican dip
- home-made samosas
- fresh falafel
- gourmet pizza
- delectable desserts
- affordable award-winning wines
- a collection of local and international beers

A BACKSTAGE PASS

POLARIS MUSIC PRIZE™

MADELEINE FOOTE

MADELEINE FOOTE gets the invite to mingle with the best of Canada's recording industry.

After years of attending whatever music scene events I could (i.e. those open to the public) as a Canadian celebrity hanger-on, I finally got the opportunity to attend an event as an authentic music journalist: the Polaris prize for best Canadian album of the year. I should emphasize that this, to me, was not just an event, this was (for anyone interested in Canadian music) *the* event to attend. With performers such as Julie Doiron (with much-loved Canadian indie darlings and first Canadian band signed to Sub-pop Eric's Trip), Joel Plaskett, Patrick Watson (being hailed as the next Arcade Fire), and newcomers The Besnard Lakes, anyone with any interest in new music would react as I did: sheer and utter awe. These are my Brad Pitts and Angelina Jolies. These are my heroes...

This is the second annual Polaris Prize, which was started by Steve Jordan as a means to honour the best Canadian album of the year, regardless of genre or commercial success. The prize was modeled after the UK's Mercury Prize, and while there was some controversy surrounding the lack of genre diversity on the nominees' list, founder Jordan has said, "Given the diversity and quality of our short list last year, we knew we had a tough act to follow. Though stylistically very different, each record on this year's list shares a depth of emotion and artistic ambition that set them apart."

I have to say, this being the first time attending a major media-covered and invite-only event, I was quite nervous. Upon arriving, (and embarrassingly getting carded before picking up my press pass) I soon realized just how out of place I was. I was stuck into the media pig-pen, which, while I found totally suitable for a first-timer like myself , I was surprised to learn it would also be home to seasoned CBCers and NOW writers alike. I was adrift except for about three people that I knew in a sea of experienced journalists.

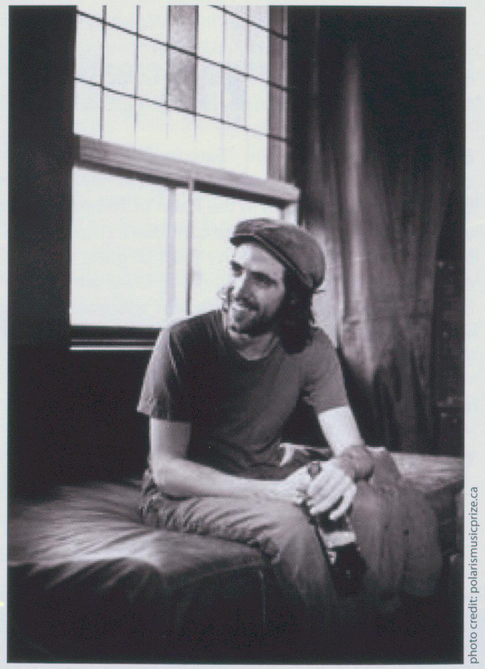


photo credit: polarismusicprize.ca

2007 Polaris Prize winner, Patrick Watson.

Grant Lawrence (of the CBC 3 radio weekly podcast) hosted the night, which included six performances and montages of interviews and music videos of the nominees who did not perform. One notable fact was that The Arcade Fire has never nor will ever do TV interviews, nor do they have any music videos. Instead of a video montage then, a video was shown that The Arcade Fire had shot themselves, specfically for the event. It featured the entire band squished into an elevator playing a haunting acoustic version of the title track off their nominated album *Neon Bible*. If you weren't at Polaris, you've missed that video forever - it will never be shown again.

Nominees
Arcade Fire, *Neon Bible*
The Besnard Lakes,
The Besnard Lakes are the Dark Horse
The Dears, *Gang of Losers*
Julie Doiron, *Woke Myself Up*
Feist, *The Reminder*
Junior Boys, *So This Is Goodbye*
Miracle Fortress, *Five Roses*
Joel Plaskett Emergency, *Ashtry Rock*
Chad VanGaalen, *Skelliconnection*
Patrick Watson, *Close to Paradise*

photo credit: polarismusicprize.ca

Patrick Watson celebrating his win.

The performances were diverse and overall quite enjoyable to watch. Patrick Watson opened the show with an extremely effective and poignant performance of two tracks off their album *Close to Paradise*. The band seemed extremely excited to be performing, and Watson substituted his microphone at the end of his second song in favour of singing to the audience directly through cupped hands, making the enormous room seem remarkably smaller and more intimate. Other noteworthy performances were the Joel Plaskett Emergency and a seemingly sloshed Julie Doiron reunited with Eric's Trip. However, my personal favourite was Chad Van Gaalen, who is famous for his reclusiveness. Watching his set, I felt as though I was engaging in a part of musical history. A performance that would go down as legend. Like being at Neil Young's famed Massey Hall concert in the 70's when he'd only just written *Harvest*. Van Gaalen began his set humbly by denouncing his introduction as an innovative musician and simply claiming he just plays "rock music". He then proceeded to perform two new tracks that were at once both very comforting and like nothing you'd ever heard before. While other performers chose to perform tracks from their nominated album, Van Gaalen chose to perform two tunes he had just written, stylistically very different from his nominated album (in hindsight, a very gutsy move). Julie Doiron even declared at the beginning of her set that she "always gets excited" when she gets to hear Chad play.

> **"These are my Brad Pitts and Angelina Jolies. These are my heroes..."**

And indeed, when the winner was announced to be Montreal band Patrick Watson, Watson grinned like a little kid while accepting the cheque and said "well, I really kinda hoped Chad would win, after seeing that performance". All joking aside, Watson's band seemed genuinely happy, if a little stunned, to win the $20,000 prize. Polaris has, in both years now, been extremely unpredictable and this, I think, is why the prize is both very unique and really just plain fun. While most conversation up in the media pen all night was surrounding the dilemma of how to choose ONE album from a list of all phenomenal but all very different ones with such little criteria for a winner (for instance if the prize was for production, Feist's *The Reminder* would have won hands-down), the grand jury of Polaris seemed to have solved this problem: just pick the one you like the best. And after all, isn't this what Polaris was intended to do, reward the band with the best album of MUSIC regardless of any financial, industry or social hang-ups?

He's got Rhythm

Jazz drummer **Ernesto Cervini** has been very busy since graduating from UofT's Faculty of Music in 2003. Having recently returned from New York after completing his Master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music, he sat down with **MARIA KAUSHANSKY** to discuss his experiences and his album, *Here*.

MARIA KAUSHANSKY

Having studied with Barry Elmes, Bob McLaren, Terry Clarke at UofT, Justin DiCioccio, and John Riley in New York, it is no wonder that at such a young age, Ernesto has already performed in some of the top jazz clubs in both New York and Toronto. In New York, he has played in 55 Bar, the Jazz Standard, Sweet Rhythm, Cornelia Street Cafe, and the legendary Birdland! In Toronto, he has played at the Rex, The Montreal Bistro, The Top of the Senator and the Pilot.

Last year, Ernesto released his first album with the Ernesto Cervini Quartet, entitled *Here*. The members of the quartet, which formed in January 2006, include Ernesto on drums, Mike Murley on tenor and soprano saxophones, Jon Maharaj on bass, and Adrean Farrugia on piano. All the tunes on the album were composed and arranged by Ernesto, and display his mastery as both a drummer and composer. The opening track, "Mestropholis", a made up word, conjures up images of busy streets of New York with its energetic feel. "Gramps" opens with a beautiful piano solo, and as the title suggests, is dedicated to his grandfather, who helped fund the project. The title track "Here" was written for his wife, Jenny, right before he left for New York. One of the most curious tracks is "TGV". He came up with the idea for it while traveling in Europe; the tune is based on the "alarm" that precedes announcements on the TGV in France! Interestingly, he says he composed some of the tunes when he was still a student at UofT ("Some were composed as assignments", he adds).

CHECK OUT!
Ernesto's website at:
www.ernestocervini.com
http://myspace.com/ernestocervini

"not taking no for an answer"

Ernesto grew up in a musical family (both his sisters are professional musicians), and music making was supported and encouraged by his parents. He cites drummers Tony Williams, Peter Erskine, Clarence Penn (his current teacher), and Jim Black among his main influences. The Bill Evans Trio, particularly their album *Portrait in Jazz* also greatly inspired him. Besides jazz, he says he listens to a variety of musical styles, including Brazilian and pop music, and names Bjork, the Dave Matthews Band and Radiohead among his favourite artists.

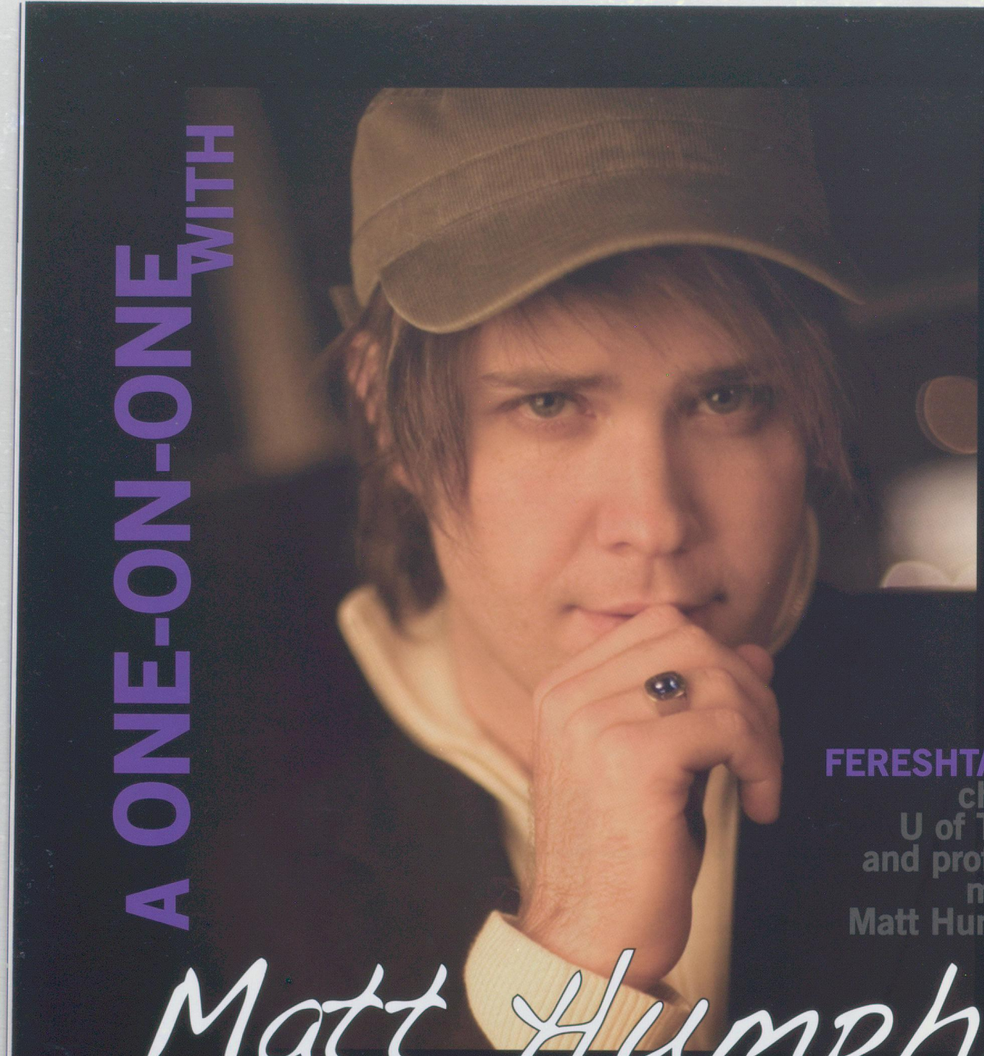
Aside from the drums, Ernesto also plays clarinet and piano, an unusual combination, and holds an ARCT Certificate from the RCM in both. He studied classical piano with Andrew Markow. Most recently, he performed the Rhapsody in Blue with the Brampton Symphony Orchestra. However, he says that his childhood years of playing jazz in Big Band ensembles greatly impacted his choice to focus on the drums as his primary instrument. Throughout high school and university, Ernesto was a member of several prominent ensembles, including the Hamilton All Star Jazz Band, the Toronto Youth Wind Orchestra, the Toronto All-Star Big Band, and even played with the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra for a year. He also conducted the Etobicoke Jazz Band for four years, and although his main focus right now is performing, directing a big band is something he says he would eventually like to do again.

Since his return to Toronto in the summer, Ernesto divides his time between performing around the city (as well as occasionally going back to New York) and teaching. Besides playing in his own quartet, he also plays with the Tara Davidson Quintet, ACQ and Monday Off. The ACQ (The Amy Cervini Quartet) is a more avant-garde group, that does covers of pop songs and groups such as Weezer, occasionally employing the accordion and clarinet. Ernesto is also the drummer for the aforementioned group, Monday Off, a vocal quartet. The name refers to the day off in Broadway, which is Monday.

At just 25 years old, Ernesto has already achieved so much. As someone who recognizes the challenges of making it in the music world, Ernesto stresses the need to "hustle and promote yourself" and as well as the importance of "staying positive and focused, not taking 'no' for an answer and supporting your peers". His versatility as a musician and his dedication and genuine love for music are truly inspiring. We should be glad that right now, "Here" for Ernesto, is Toronto.

spotlight

A ONE-ON-ONE WITH



FERESHTA NOORI chats with U of T Alumni and professional musician, Matt Humphreys.

Matt Humphreys

One may ask, who is Matt Humphreys? And what is it that he does? *Demo* recently had a chance to catch up with Matt and we can say, he isn't another jaded musician, that's for sure. His songs can be described as cheerful tunes about the more optimistic aspects of life. As described by a fan on his MySpace: "I like your sound it's bubbly and fresh...like wake-up-in-the-morning music!"

Matt Humphreys was born in Timmins, ON and started singing at the age of two. As a rookie, he started out singing in music festivals and choirs. He later went on to form a Celtic band that went by the name of "Urban Folk" during the years 1998-2003 while studying Music at our very own U of T! Matt's proven to be quite the multi-tasker: "Matt was playing all the time – and still did well at University and finished his degree," says his mother Mollie, "I'm a proud mom." Following that, he took a short break to rethink exactly what he wants to accomplish as a musician. Soon after, he relaunched his music career, this time going solo, which has now resulted in his debut album *Everything Changed on the Way....*

Fun Fact!
Matt has competed as one of the top 32 in the first season of Canadian Idol.

the conversation

So you have your debut album out! How does it feel?

Good, feels great to finally do it, I've been working on things that hasn't been my own for so long. It feels good to finally have them out and to actually have music that is written by me and not someone else.

How have your studies at U of T prepared you for your music career if at all?

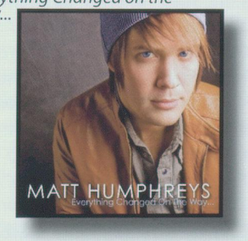
In my last year at U of T, Faculty of Music, I took a full year of recording classes, mic placement, mixing, everything, it was part of my degree. That helped me with the album, so yes, it did prepare me. It made me a better musician, of course.

"You need to go and make opportunities for yourself."

DEMO

And lastly, do you have any advice to current students at U of T now who are doing what you did while you were there? Or do you have any advice to aspiring musicians in general?

Humphreys' debut album, *Everything Changed on the Way...*



DEMO

MATT HUMPHREYS

Before you focused on your own songwriting, what did you enjoy playing?

I just did a lot of cover songs. I used to be in a Celtic band so we did a lot of Irish songs.

DEMO

MATT HUMPHREYS

Generally speaking, how did the production of the whole album go?

Because I'm an indie artist, I funded this whole album myself. I paid for it, I organised it, and I'm the producer. Not only are a lot of indie artists forced to do that, but it also gives any artist with any sort of control over their career the ability to micro-manage and make decisions that a label wouldn't let you make. I work in music-marketing, and I'm able to apply all those concepts to my own work.

MATT HUMPHREYS

Just go out and play because when you're at the Faculty of Music, you don't have enough chances to play. You need to go and make opportunities for yourself. Nobody teaches you to network, you have to go out and rehearse as much as you can. Just go out and play and network for yourself.

I guess the only thing I could really add is that being a musician is hard. It really is hard, especially if you're trying to do everything yourself, but you get the satisfaction of being able to do it all yourself, if you can accomplish anything good, then you get the benefits from that. I really wanna encourage anyone who wants to be a musician to do the best they can.

Tracks from Matt Humphreys' bubbly sounding EP can be heard on his MySpace, the full EP can be purchased through iTunes.

opinion

Download Almost Complete

RODOLFO SILVA-MERA talks about the recording industry's need for transformation.

Download Progress: 4.475KB/4.352KB

You know, it's like going to Starbucks. A coffee maker costs $15 dollars at Canadian Tire and it even includes a cup. Why would anyone spend $1.75 for a "tall" coffee when you can get more for less? Because it has obviously never been about the coffee itself. Let's face it, we feel chic with a Starbucks in-hand! But, without the nice seating area, the dim-lights and the jazz behind it, there's no poetry in it. We just don't feel it, and it seems the recording music industry is heading that way too.

It's hard to believe that record labels do not get it. It's not a matter of how to control music; it's a matter of how much charm they are putting into it. Okay. Let's not get romantic, but people think that true artists belong in Conservatories and take mainstream phenomena as a business. Well... SURPRISE, the business is to make people feel!

The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) reports that for every legally acquired song, 20 are illegally downloaded. Try to think about the percentage of legally bought music you own. I knew it, you are a criminal!

So how would you feel if the RIAA sues you for 220,000 USD? Not even the superpowerful Loonie could save you. Certainly it did not save Jammie Thomas, a single mother from Minnesota. Not only because she's an American, but also because she entered her real personal information into her Kazaa account. Marking the first time that a lawsuit against individual downloaders had gone to trial, the 2007 verdict ordered Thomas to pay 220,000 USD to the six major labels involved in this fiasco. This is *only* for downloading 24 songs from Kazaa. But, is the lesson here (if any) to learn to respect intellectual property? Or to learn not to use real and personal information on your Kazaa account? (By the way, do not worry. In Canada, these kinds of lawsuits would never go through thanks to the sketchy phrasing in the copyright infringement code.)

The avid democratic experience that the internet brings us is truly as close to freedom as we might get in this electronic generation. It's an all-you-can-eat buffet. People can be selfish, totally careless, and rip off the hard earned multi-million dollar pay of popular musicians. In the end, it's not like we will cause them to go bankrupt, unless of course it's Michael Jackson! This fake democracy and true anarchy is unstoppable and it seems it's finally being accepted by some well-known acts such as Radiohead. Their last musical effort, *Rainbows*, was sold as a pay-what-you-can record achieving substantial sales. Best of all, the money went directly to the artists.

This culture of worship and true support to the artist seem to have vanished nowadays with the hyper-commercialization of music. Everyday, it is tougher and tougher to find credibility in this business of music. Just look around. Everyone is making music, and that seems to be the problem. Obtaining and sharing music illegally is definitely not new and the music business is not undergoing any severe crisis -- the recording industry is though. Now you too can make great sounds with GarageBand.

Accessibility to music making software and home studios have taken away the glamour of recorded music, which was responsible for transforming music makers into performers ratherthanartists.Record labels need to find new ways to commercialize music and make it a true spectacle just like they are doing on TV. Look at American Idol. The artistry there lies is the way they market the show itself -- not the singers (and it is genius)! We need all of those fireworks in recorded music to go beyond recording as a science of acoustics and towards a true mirror of creativity that will make us think of artists, managers, and labels as powerful and faithful visionaries. It is not that we are tired of seeing overmarketed artists as brands, but that we need new magic because we are tired of the old tricks. They need to hit us with a huge injection of "wow" and then maybe we'll rethink about buying music and financially supporting certain artists. We are 100% aware that we are part of the show, we just don't like to think about it.

Ultimately, music should be free as a form of expression. If the artists are good enough, they may even get as lucky as Radiohead. This band was able to give away their records for free and get paid for making great music. As I see it, the recording industry is evolving so quickly that one day it'll be weird to learn that people actually paid money for records. Everyone will be giving away free samples of their own delicacies to impress whoever is available and convince them that they are as real as music can get. A donation governed system does not necessarily reflect a lack of glamour or profit -- you only have to look at the church as proof of that. Hopefully, we will free ourselves of amateurs using GarageBand to make "music" and upload it to Myspace and it will only show us the true winners, the ones truly worthy our money.

True artists will keep on flourishing and winning even in this exhausted system. We are now at a critical time. The recording industry needs to evolve and stop being only a recording industry. They need to put effort into finding different and unique ways of convincing us to be a part of the system.

So bring the fireworks because anyone can cook, but only those with the spark can ignite us. We as listeners will remain unsatisfied until music makers discover new methods of poetry and magic -- not only marketing.

RODOLFO SILVA-MERA
rudysilvamer.com

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"The RIAA reports that for every legally acquired song, 20 are illegally downloaded."

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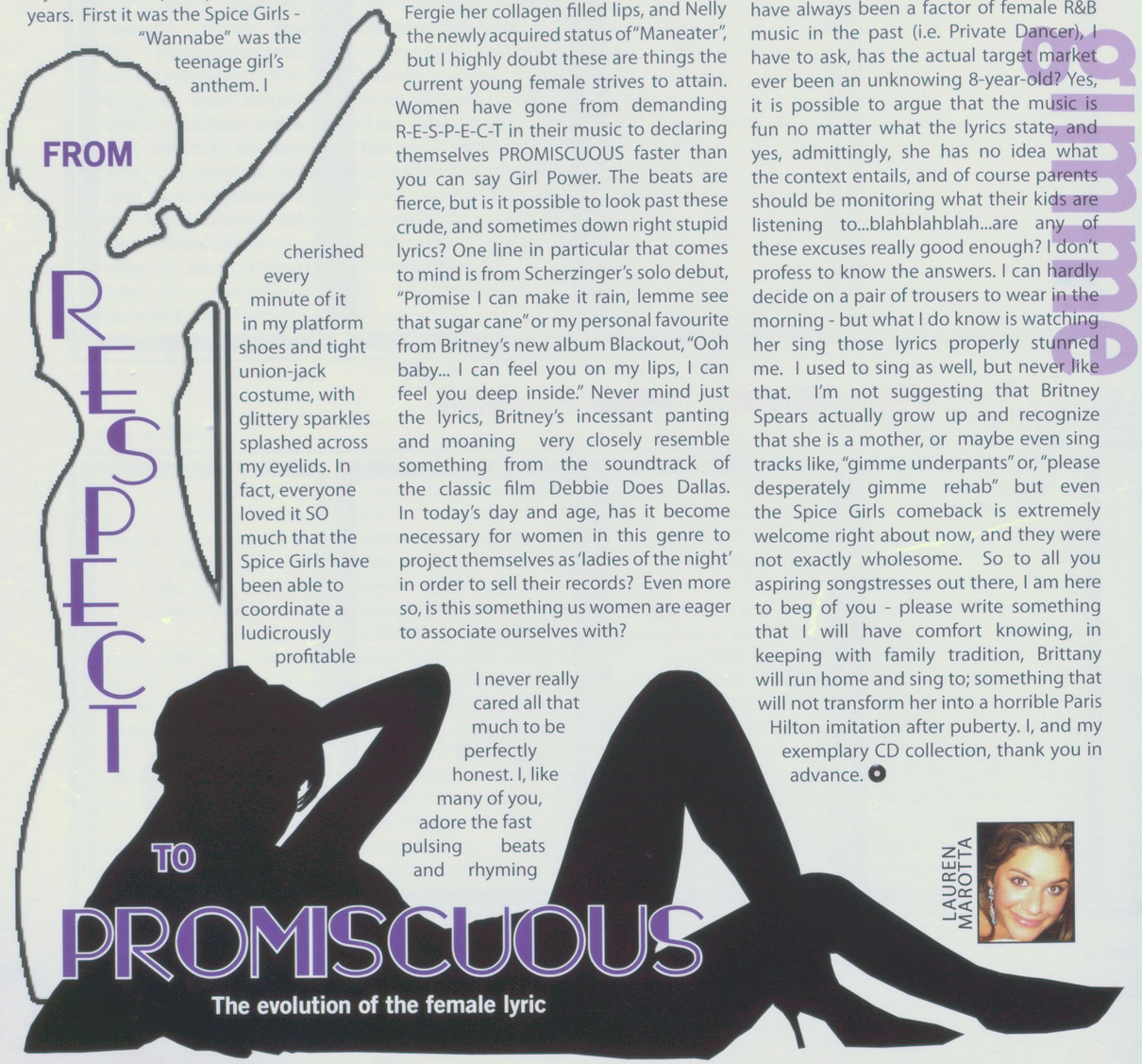
FROM RESPECT TO PROMISCUOUS

The evolution of the female lyric



Some people have photo albums that they pull off a dusty shelf when they crave a trip down memory lane; I, on the other hand, have my music. From Aretha to Whitney, my collection is crawling with divas. At the ripe young age of 8, I would rush home from school to perform concerts in my living room. What can I say, we all have our secrets, I am not ashamed to tell you mine, as it embodies many of my fondest childhood memories.

Despite my penchant for a "What's Love Got To Do With It", the old favourites have taken a back seat to my new contemporary loves over the years. First it was the Spice Girls - "Wannabe" was the teenage girl's anthem. I cherished every minute of it in my platform shoes and tight union-jack costume, with glittery sparkles splashed across my eyelids. In fact, everyone loved it SO much that the Spice Girls have been able to coordinate a ludicrously profitable reunion tour; except this time, sans sparkles, Old Spice replaces Ginger Spice, and all the other Mommy Spices will undoubtedly be covering up their zig-a-zig-ah's. Eventually, my sparkle splashing phase came to an end, and another beloved memory was shelved, only to be replaced by Britney Spears, All Saints, No Doubt, and Alicia Keys.

Lately, the female R&B/Pop scene is exploding with names like Gwen Stefani, Fergie, Nelly Furtado, Rihanna, Britney Spears (again!) and former lead Pussycat Doll Nicole Scherzinger. Sure Gwen Stefani has her imaginary Harajuku Girls, Fergie her collagen filled lips, and Nelly the newly acquired status of "Maneater", but I highly doubt these are things the current young female strives to attain. Women have gone from demanding R-E-S-P-E-C-T in their music to declaring themselves PROMISCUOUS faster than you can say Girl Power. The beats are fierce, but is it possible to look past these crude, and sometimes down right stupid lyrics? One line in particular that comes to mind is from Scherzinger's solo debut, "Promise I can make it rain, lemme see that sugar cane" or my personal favourite from Britney's new album Blackout, "Ooh baby... I can feel you on my lips, I can feel you deep inside." Never mind just the lyrics, Britney's incessant panting and moaning very closely resemble something from the soundtrack of the classic film Debbie Does Dallas. In today's day and age, has it become necessary for women in this genre to project themselves as 'ladies of the night' in order to sell their records? Even more so, is this something us women are eager to associate ourselves with?

I never really cared all that much to be perfectly honest. I, like many of you, adore the fast pulsing beats and rhyming lyrics. But, what really shocked me, was a car ride with my utterly precocious 8-year-old cousin Brittany. Immediately after turning on the car she demanded I, "blast it", but very shortly after began screaming, "It's Britney Bitch!!! Every time they turn the lights down, just wanna go that extra mile for you....cameras are flashing while we're dirty dancing, we keep on rocking... Gimme gimme more" while shaking and smacking her bum all the while. At this point, I immediately changed the track, but not before lifting my jaw up from the floor and catching my breath.

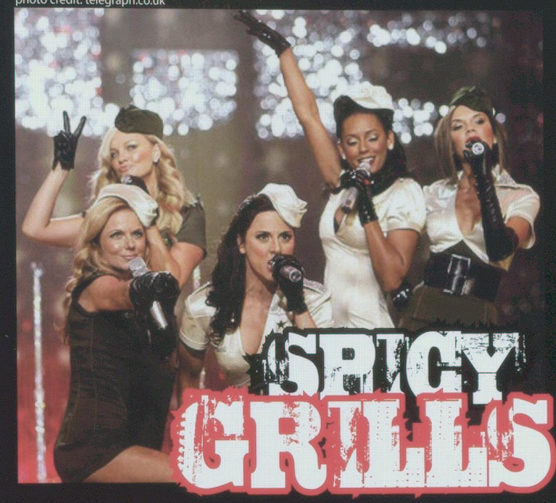
While it is true that sexually explicit lyrics have always been a factor of female R&B music in the past (i.e. Private Dancer), I have to ask, has the actual target market ever been an unknowing 8-year-old? Yes, it is possible to argue that the music is fun no matter what the lyrics state, and yes, admittingly, she has no idea what the context entails, and of course parents should be monitoring what their kids are listening to...blahblahblah...are any of these excuses really good enough? I don't profess to know the answers. I can hardly decide on a pair of trousers to wear in the morning - but what I do know is watching her sing those lyrics properly stunned me. I used to sing as well, but never like that. I'm not suggesting that Britney Spears actually grow up and recognize that she is a mother, or maybe even sing tracks like, "gimme underpants" or, "please desperately gimme rehab" but even the Spice Girls comeback is extremely welcome right about now, and they were not exactly wholesome. So to all you aspiring songstresses out there, I am here to beg of you - please write something that I will have comfort knowing, in keeping with family tradition, Brittany will run home and sing to; something that will not transform her into a horrible Paris Hilton imitation after puberty. I, and my exemplary CD collection, thank you in advance.

LAUREN MAROTTA

Ah, Spicemania. Platform shoes, the Union Jack, Girl Power. After almost a decade, with months of rumours and on-again-off-again plans, the stage is set once again for the entrance of Scary, Posh, Baby, Sporty and Ginger.
The Spice Girls have reformed.

My immediate reaction to the news was an unapologetic "Hooray!" followed by an unhealthy dose of squeals and giggles. Yes, I was a die-hard fan. But what about Spice life in the present? How have the pop sisters fared? The answer is, not at all. The odd successful song here and there, a TV show, autobiographies, babies….oh, and Mel B getting knocked up by Eddie Murphy (but I think that's more of an achievement on his part). In other words, major, major blah.

photo credit: telegraph.co.uk



It was never a surprise though, that none of their solo careers took off. It was only as a unit that they took the world by storm. In a period where the music scene was dominated by boy bands, the Spice Girls emerged as the first (and arguably only) all-girl group who embodied everything pop in their music, image, and attitude. There was a wide gaping hole in the industry waiting to be filled, and they were the missing piece. Many would agree that they defined the decade with their zig-a-zig-ah. Yes, the talent was questionable and yes, the in-your-face personalities were obnoxious at times. But one thing I've noticed is that people hate and love the Spice Girls for the same reasons. It was precisely that almost amateur aura that appealed. They weren't supermodel gorgeous, and that was precisely it. Cheeky and not intimidating, they seemed like the troublemakers you'd find sitting at the back of class, the ones you couldn't stand but kept things interesting. For all the tackiness and musical mediocrity that we see and hear looking back at it all, it's recalled with an embarrassed smile and fondness.

I proudly admit again therefore, that I loved the Spice Girls, and still love them. But this reunion is leaving me in a limbo between "Oh yes!" and "Oh no!" The problem is that they aren't the Spice Girls anymore. They're not even Spice Girls All Grown Up. Sure, it works out in the sense that their fan base is grown up and, being eternally devoted, are able to dish out the cash -- tickets for the concert in London sold out in 38 seconds flat. Numbers and figures are not going to be a problem at all. But in other respects it's almost a lose-lose situation. They certainly can't, and won't want to be on stage donning their trademark costumes jumping around yelling about Girl Power. My god, people would get strokes. But the alternative image of "sophisticated" (read: skankalicious), sexy women doesn't offer much either. In short, if they can't work the old defining nicknames, which were probably the crux of the group, what's the point? Look at them now and you think: Skeletal Spice, Boring-flat-hair Spice, Rocker-ish-kinda-not-really-I-hate-the-Spice-Girls Spice, I-have-a-Baby Spice, and…Geri Spice (I gave up).

It makes one wonder why they're even doing this in the first place. Money, boredom, a final shot in the spotlight -- whatever the reason, it's not because they've missed each other to death. In fact, the chemistry simply isn't there anymore. They may be godmothering each other's offspring, but the best-friends-forever image is just plain forced and awkward now. Take Mel C's open admittance of her reluctance to sign up, and subsequent threats of leaving "if it goes into diva drama". That sure gets things off to a roaring start. And it looks like the drama is already kicking in, with reports of Victoria herself threatening to quit if rehearsals aren't held in LA. But enough on the gossip. For further and more solid proof of the lack of group cohesion, just watch the cheese-fest of a music video for the ironically titled "Headlines (Friendship Never Ends)", one of the two new songs coming off their Greatest Hits album. Except for a rather sketchy, eyebrow raising cut of Victoria caressing Geri's head on her lap, the girls don't so much as look at one another. Instead they are all in their own little corners of a big room reclining on various furniture items getting lost in the heart-felt lyrics, and by heart-felt lyrics I mean self-indulgent posing. The only instance they come close to standing next to each other, is a photoshopped montage. Also, Victoria as a dominatrix? Yeesh.

As for the song itself, upon first listen I was ready to review it as a three minute snore fest -flat and uninspiring--but to be fair, the next day I had it humming in my head, and not in an altogether annoying way. What can I say, it's your typical la-la sugary pop song. I certainly wasn't expecting anything mind-blowing, but at the same time I wasn't feeling the Spice vibe. Mel C's verse was a highlight, but at the same time felt detached from the rest of the song with its rock vibe. I don't know, maybe they should have considered tweaking their old hits instead…

I've realised, I don't want a Spice Girls reunion. What I want is a time machine so I can travel back to the 90s without regressing in age myself, and experience it all a second time round. And on that note, someone pass the salt please.

VICTORIA WANG

Review concert

AT THE ARBOR ROOM

presented by
the stages programme

CORBIN ALBANI
photography: **PAUL WATSON**

When I walked in, the place was packed. I noticed the ceiling fan, barely moving, above where the audience would soon be, and thought "This is not gonna work." Naturally, it didn't.

Granted, I went into it knowing two Spiral Beach songs and an MTV Canada online performance, but in my experience, shows at the Arbor Room, mostly acoustic acts, draw sparse audiences only half interested in the music. But when I arrived well beforehand, all the seats were taken and there were already a few chairless refugees in front of the stage. When the band came on at 9:30, there was a surge to the front. It felt like—a real show? Surprised.

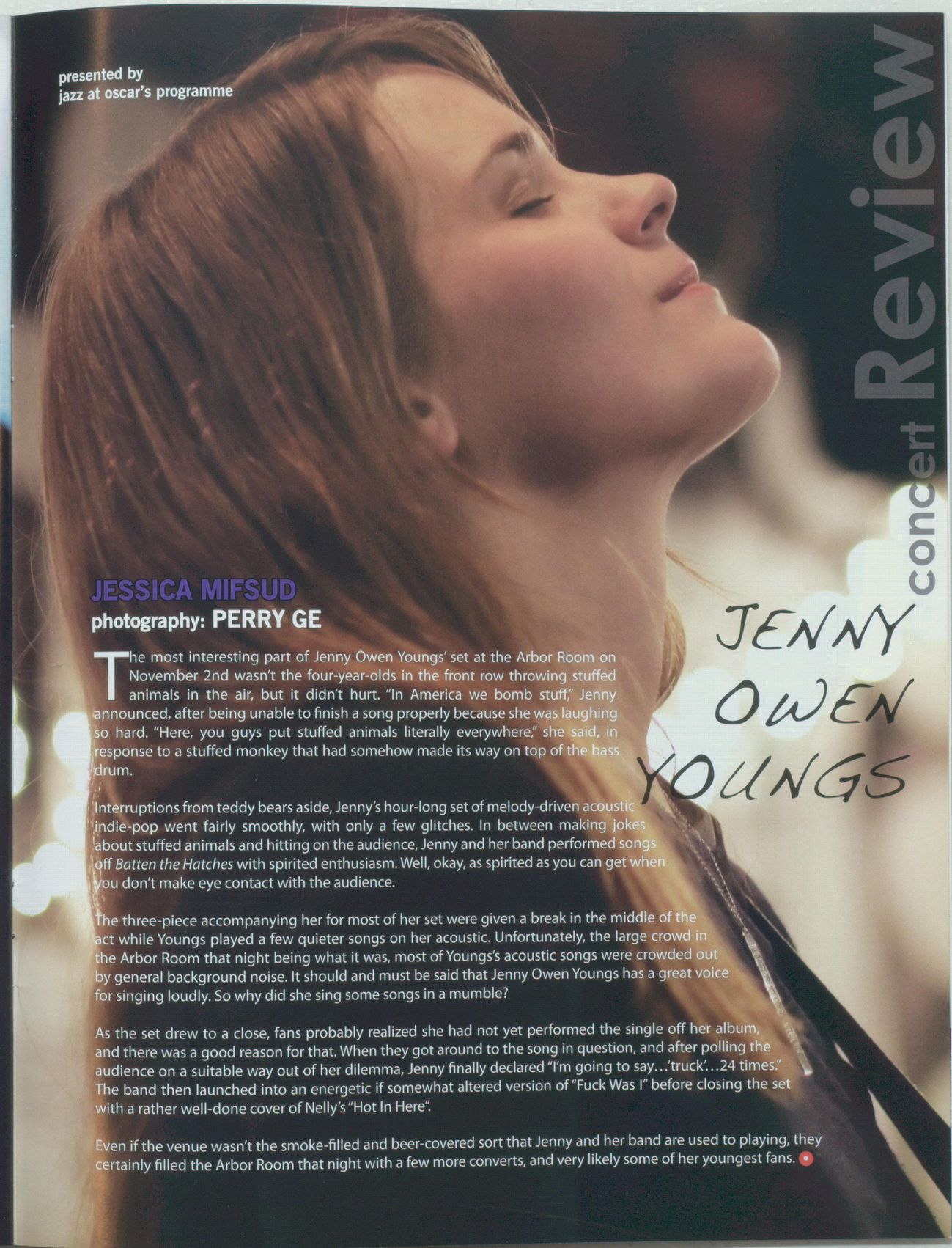
As soon as the drummer started yelling into a microphone (though strangely quieter than the rest of the instruments) and someone started smacking chains around on stage, I realized that Spiral Beach was thankfully going to bust open my plan of sitting around and taking a few notes. Their mastered fusion of art rock and garage punk, interspersed with breaks of funk, dub, and noise rock (if noise rock had grown a charming sense of humour), definitely gave the show a dance-or-die attitude. Without resorting to jerky transitional instrumentations or misplaced bridges, the band managed to whip the audience into a complete state of ecstatic groove, with no one left standing still and no help from that ceiling fan.

Beyond the music itself, Spiral Beach gives an electric stage show. As for stage props: at 99 per cent of shows, and no one—but the band—is fooled into thinking that the indulgent amalgamation of sculpture and sound creates a better show. Why put all that clutter on stage? Somehow Spiral Beach did it right, maybe because of its novelty. The brightly coloured amps, orange safety pylons, cartoon word bubble containing the band's name, and live action/claymation adaptation of Alice in Wonderland playing in the background all managed to enhance the performance (although the film did prove distracting, at least to me, as the show progressed).

Of course, once the show started, I could barely manage to see the stage, given the sizable audience having crammed themselves into the Arbor Room as tight as Robert Plant's package in those old jeans of his.

Review concert

presented by
jazz at oscar's programme



JESSICA MIFSUD
photography: **PERRY GE**

The most interesting part of Jenny Owen Youngs' set at the Arbor Room on November 2nd wasn't the four-year-olds in the front row throwing stuffed animals in the air, but it didn't hurt. "In America we bomb stuff," Jenny announced, after being unable to finish a song properly because she was laughing so hard. "Here, you guys put stuffed animals literally everywhere," she said, in response to a stuffed monkey that had somehow made its way on top of the bass drum.

Interruptions from teddy bears aside, Jenny's hour-long set of melody-driven acoustic indie-pop went fairly smoothly, with only a few glitches. In between making jokes about stuffed animals and hitting on the audience, Jenny and her band performed songs off *Batten the Hatches* with spirited enthusiasm. Well, okay, as spirited as you can get when you don't make eye contact with the audience.

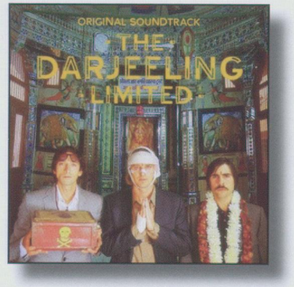
The three-piece accompanying her for most of her set were given a break in the middle of the act while Youngs played a few quieter songs on her acoustic. Unfortunately, the large crowd in the Arbor Room that night being what it was, most of Youngs's acoustic songs were crowded out by general background noise. It should and must be said that Jenny Owen Youngs has a great voice for singing loudly. So why did she sing some songs in a mumble?

As the set drew to a close, fans probably realized she had not yet performed the single off her album, and there was a good reason for that. When they got around to the song in question, and after polling the audience on a suitable way out of her dilemma, Jenny finally declared "I'm going to say…'truck'…24 times." The band then launched into an energetic if somewhat altered version of "Fuck Was I" before closing the set with a rather well-done cover of Nelly's "Hot In Here".

Even if the venue wasn't the smoke-filled and beer-covered sort that Jenny and her band are used to playing, they certainly filled the Arbor Room that night with a few more converts, and very likely some of her youngest fans.

The Darjeeling Limited

Directed by: Wes Anderson



Soundtrack

NAVI LAMBA

Rarely do we find ourselves inspired by soundtrack compilations for films. There are really two varieties of film soundtrack, and neither one of them would include the moniker "Good." The first is what has given the modern soundtrack its bad reputation. One too many poorly composed ballads. Far too little substance, form or prose. The second, ostensibly higher-brow variety will often feature hundreds of formally trained musicians. Too bad they bore us to bits. But then, pity the professional who is paid to sit in a room for hours playing something long and droning to go along with an equally long and droning film.

Those precious few soundtracks that don't fit into either variety, that can actually stand a listening on album repeat, that are cohesive enough to tell a story as much as does the film itself, are a rare breed. So after enjoying Wes Anderson's film, The Darjeeling Limited, pick up the CD. Anderson's film productions—his most recent being The Royal Tenenbaums and The Life Aquatic—form a good audio tradition, especially as in both films Devo member, Mark Mothersbaugh composed the original scores. As well, Seu Jorge's Portuguese renditions of Bowie classics were a prominent feature in Life Aquatic.

The Darjeeling Limited, with its combination of classic Bollywood and classic rock 'n' roll, doesn't disappoint.

Like the soundtracks to other Anderson productions, its success is in using old songs to tell a new story. And, as my mother often says, "old is gold."

My Indian heritage may make me a tad biased towards the exquisite selection of Hindi songs, but their solid and harmonious composition stand up for themselves. Many of the tracks, such as "Bombay Talkie," "The Guru," and "The Householder," were taken from Merchant-Ivory films. Music composed by Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray, whom Anderson has cited as an artistic inspiration, is simpler in style and yet packs an emotional punch, which provided an incredible aural component for the film. My two favourite tracks come from Ray's Bombay Talkie, which successfully incorporated the classical Indian elements lost from Indian cinema today, which has become this horribly nauseating twist on American popular culture.

The rock 'n' roll takes from the Kinks and the Rolling Stones. For those more familiar with this tradition, the Kinks tracks especially, oozing good times and nostalgia as they do, are ridiculously appropriate. The story of three brothers reuniting to travel to India for some needed "soul searching" goes splendidly with the likes of "This Time Tomorrow" and "Strangers."

"Powerman," also by the Kinks, has been on heavy rotation at my place, and I am not ashamed to admit that "Typewriter, Tip, Tip, Tip" performed by Asha Bhosle and Kishore Kumar make a very close second (if you listen to the song, you might understand the "shameful" factor).

Although the film is set in India, it is in no way restricted by this geographic situation. The soundtrack has beautifully incorporated various elements of musical style. One would usually expect a very choppy and strange result, but Darjeeling shows these tracks as being in some way related to one another. Classic Anderson.

Music of the Spheres

Music, Science, and the Natural Order of the Universe - by Jamie James

MARY SCOURBOUTAKOS

In modern times, the arts and the sciences seem to be at different ends of the academic spectrum. However, this was not always the case; until the 19th century, it was quite the opposite.

Jamie James recounts the interlocked history of music and science, and explores music as "the key to the universe" with an in-depth examination in his *Music of the Spheres: Music, Science and the Natural Order of the Universe.*

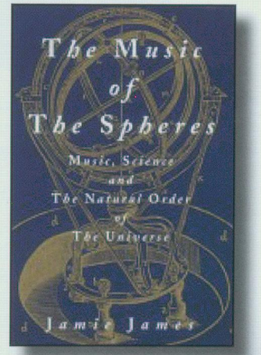
The following excerpt encompasses the premise of the book, "picture yourself, if you can, a universe in which everything makes sense. A serene order presides over the earth around you, and the heavens above revolve in sublime harmony. Everything you can see and hear and know is an aspect of the ultimate truth: the noble simplicity of a geometric theorem […] and here on earth, too, no less than in the heavens and in the world of ideas, order prevails […] It is not simply a matter of faith: the best philosophical and scientific minds have proved that this is so." This concept was intended to help man find his place in the universe. Consequently, *the Music of the Spheres* is a commentary on the role of humanity as a shaper of music and the role of music as a shaper of humanity.

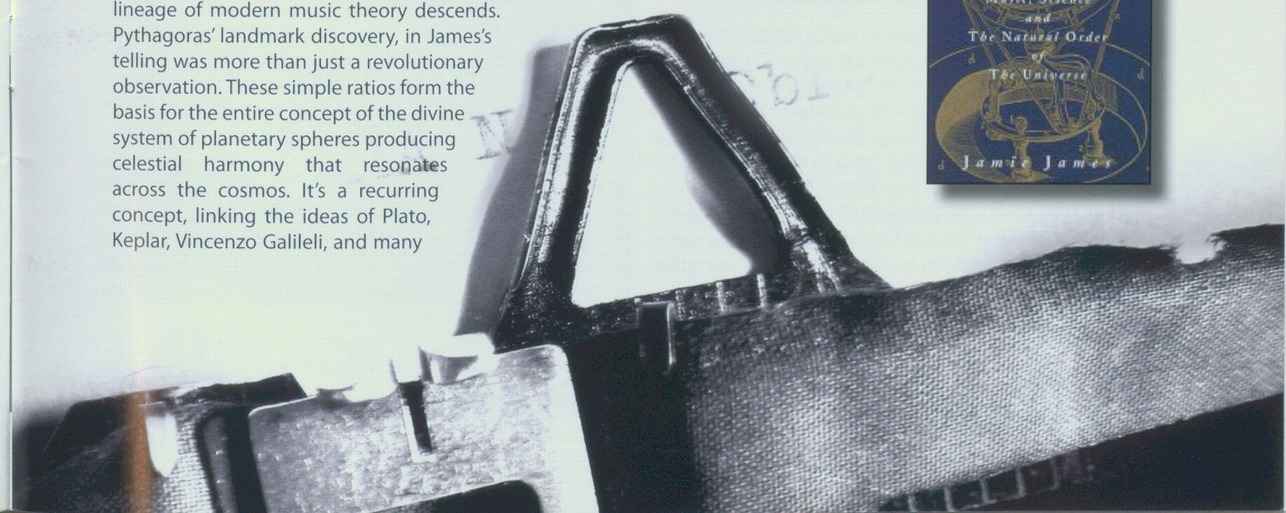
James begins with Pythagoras and his historic walk past the Brazier's shop whereby the entire lineage of modern music theory descends. Pythagoras' landmark discovery, in James's telling was more than just a revolutionary observation. These simple ratios form the basis for the entire concept of the divine system of planetary spheres producing celestial harmony that resonates across the cosmos. It's a recurring concept, linking the ideas of Plato, Keplar, Vincenzo Galileli, and many others. Thus, James showcases Pythagoras's perception of the interrelatedness of all human knowledge as "The Great Theme" that sets the stage for the revolutionary ideas that followed in the succeeding centuries.

James goes on to explore Kepler's discovery of the corresponding distances between the planets and musical interval ratios, which affirmed the harmony of the spheres and the divine order of the universe. "What is that great and pleasing sound that fills my ears?" Kepler asked. According to the philosophers and scientists of the 17th century, the concord of tones Kepler depicted in his geometric scheme of the solar system, as illustrated using the divine monochord, combines the planets and elements with the musical scale. It is these fascinating ideas that James perceives to be embodied by the works of the great classical composers, and thrashed by the Romantic era.

The Music of the Spheres showcases music as one of the highest intellectual pursuits, thoroughly discussing its multiple facets with informative historical anecdotes. For all who believe in the divine power of music, this book reasserts its integral role and its power to change how we perceive the universe, as how we view the distinctiveness or equivalency between that cosmos and music.

Put simply, this book is about music and science, but more importantly it intertwines the histories of multiple disciplines and the individuals who revolutionized them.

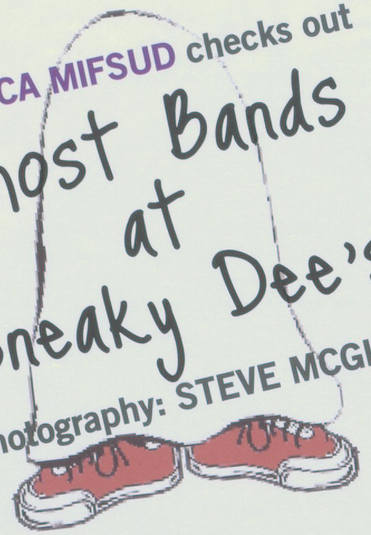




Ghost Bands at Sneaky Dee's

JESSICA MIFSUD checks out

photography: STEVE MCGIE



You know it's there, watching you with those sunken skull-eyes. You may walk by it on your way down College Street, or whiz by on the Bathurst streetcar, but you can't turn your eyes away. Sneaky Dee's, one of downtown Toronto's (in)famous landmarks, celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. The student haven is renowned especially for its Mexican food (try the nachos!), relaxed atmosphere, and for supporting local bands and DJs, with something going on up on the second floor practically every night of the week.

JESSICA MIFSUD

With that in mind, it was to Sneaky's that this reviewer headed to sample one night's mixed bag of treats served alongside the usual burritos and beer. It was truly eerie how all the bands that night, despite their differences, had one thing in common…

Ghost Hands

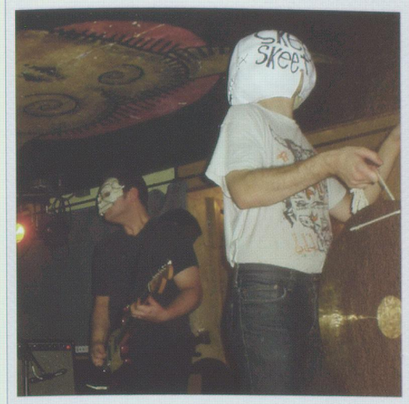
Ghost Hands: self-described as soul/trance/gothic, this is only proof that Andre Theriault (a.k.a. Ghost Hands) has a sense of humour. The set Theriault played, all by his lonesome on his acoustic guitar, definitely fits more in the realm of folksy pop, with songs like "What Loves Me" and "Something Somewhere." With lyrics to the effect of "ashes in tea… so you can digest me," Theriault needs to work on his word choice, but he definitely shows potential. Sounds like: a young novice City and Colour on happy pills, playing in major chords. Great for: a sing-along around a campfire on your best friend's uncle's farm.

Rating: 2.5 guitar picks out of 5.

ghostlight

Ghostlight: an answer to the age-old question of "What do you get when you add half a dozen guys, guitars, drums, bass, a large gong, a Jack Skeleton mask, and amps turned up to eleven, and then let them play whatever they want?" A wave, nay, a tsunami of noise. Also, you have Ghostlight. It didn't matter if you had to plug your ears to hear the intricacy, Jack Skeleton with his mask on backwards banging away at his gong like his life depended on it made up for it. Sounds like: the last 15 jumbled seconds of Sergeant Pepper's played at max, extended to run for 25 minutes straight. Great for: times when you are pondering the meaning of life (stop it!).

Rating: 2.5 exploded amplifiers out of 5.



Proof of ghosts.

Proof of Ghosts: Proof of Ghosts were the first band of the night to do a couple of things. They announced titles for their songs, and used the smoke machine liberally. Steve Shoe's vocals make him a distant cousin of Neil Young and the songs are as mellow as they are catchy. Sounds like: Neil Young deciding to spend a relaxing day out on the farm and away from the politics. Great for: car trips to Owen Sound, and sunny afternoons in a hammock.

Rating: 3.5 smoke machines out of 5.

Ghost Television

Ghost Television: self described as electronica/industrial/punk, these two guys (one for the impressive vocals, and one to work the sound board) are doing really well at capturing the abrasive, gritty, pounding sound that would make a great Matrix fight scene if Keanu Reeves was 47 per cent more bad-ass. They even got a handful of people dancing during their set, which was impressive considering they were the first band of the night, and not many people were around at the time. Sounds like: classic Skinny Puppy at double the speed. Great for: those scenes in modern sci-fi or horror movies that are set in punk clubs.

Rating: 3 horror movie soundtracks out of 5.

THE GHOST IS DANCING!!!!

The Ghost is Dancing: self described as indie/pop, this is one band that definitely nails their label. When the quirky seven-piece band got up on stage, each dressed as a character from Super Mario 3 (including the Venus flytrap), this reviewer knew the three-and-a-half-hour wait had been worth it. TGID proceeded to play their if not unique then certainly enthusiastic bunch of genuinely happy songs, with lots of handclaps and la-la-la choruses. At their rendition of the Super Mario theme song, complete with trumpet accompaniment, the crowd went wild. That the band seemed thrilled to be there made the whole smoke-filled room a little brighter. Sounds like: have you had a good day lately? Skipped down the street?

Rating: 4.5 Princess Peach tutus out of 5.

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Spiral Beach in concert at the Arbor Room, Hart House 2007. Photograph: MACY SIU